

NATIONAL YOUTH FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS FOOTBALL RULES & PROCEDURES

(Excerpt from the NYFC Team Folder)

Complete event Rules & procedures are mailed to every registered NYFC team within the NYFC Team Folder. However, these are the important football rules for the NYFC event.

1. COMPETITION RELATED ITEMS

A. *Eligible Teams & Players at the NYFC*

1. All youngsters are eligible to participate in the National Youth Football Championships, so long as the player:
 1. Has played for the team all season (not an "add-on" must be an original team member since the first game!)
 2. Has their name appear on the team's official league roster
 3. Can meet the prescribed age/weight limits established for your team by Sports Network
 4. The only exception to the rules listed under #1 & #2 are those players added to the team **WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE NYFC EVENT DIRECTOR.**
2. Under certain conditions, a team MAY be allowed to add players to their team only with the permission of the NYFC Competition Director. All-star teams are prohibited in every competition division at the NYFC. However, teams are allowed to "bring up" younger, less experienced players from "B" teams or younger teams from within their own football organization. Again, ANY & ALL roster modifications must be approved in advance by SNI.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING INCLUSION OF SCHOOL PLAYERS: Many coaches have asked about BOTH the playing and/or addition of school football players to their NYFC roster. SNI has established a policy regarding these players that all teams must follow:

"No player may be ADDED to your team that has played any form of public/private school football within the past 6 months."

Therefore, if your league and school system allows players to play both school football and youth football, so long as the player was on your league roster at the beginning of the season and has played for you the entire year, they are a part of your team and are eligible to play here at the NYFC. However, **DO NOT call and ask if you can ADD a player to your team that has played for any type of school football team in the past 6 months** – use of this player will forfeit your games here at the NYFC.

3. Few teams are able to bring an entire regular-season unit (due to injuries, family commitments, etc.). It is strongly advised that teams attempt to bring as many eligible players as possible. All teams entering the NYFC must have no less than **twenty (20)**, ready-to-compete players on their official NYFC roster. This rule helps to ensure that other teams who have worked hard to attend the NYFC, expecting to play two games, will not be disappointed by a team which comes with few players and then cannot field a team for either game. Any exceptions to this rule are granted only by the NYFC Competition Director and are at his sole discretion. There is no maximum limit to the number of players.

B. *The Use of Ineligible Players*

1. Being an invitation-only tournament, no team "earns" the right to play at the NYFC. With Sports Network International having no "host" football teams involved in the event, a completely unbiased competition exists (rare in post-season play!) There are several teams and leagues who petition for entry into the NYFC every year who are turned away because of past or present conduct or other actions not condoned by the Competition Committee of SNI. The attempted use of ineligible players is the most serious infraction and is dealt with severely at the NYFC.
2. The staff of SNI makes every effort to see that no team enters the competition with "sandbag" players; those using bogus birth certificates or forming a post-season traveling team outside the rules set forth in this document. It is the sole responsibility of the HEAD COACH to ensure all players making the trip are on the roster and eligible to play under the conditions set forth for the NYFC.
3. If a team is found to have used an ineligible player, the team may be removed from the event, forfeit any games played, and forfeit ALL monies paid. Any games played using an ineligible player will be forfeited and the football team will become ineligible to receive any team awards.

4. The severity of this penalty should leave little doubt how seriously we look at this infraction. Use of illegal players is the most serious breach of coaching ethics that can occur at the event. Coaches that have been discovered using illegal players have ruined their personal reputations and that of their programs – do not let this happen to you! Make it a point to know your players and the NYFC rules on this matter!
5. Cheerleading squads will not be affected by the actions of their football team or vice-versa. However, future entry status of the organization as a whole may be affected by the actions of either group.

C. Team Age Cut-Off Dates

1. Every team and league playing youth football in the U.S. has a different age cutoff date for player eligibility. Most teams utilize a date between August 1st and September 15th. As explained under 1-A "The Philosophy of the NYFC," the age cut-off date of the entrant is just another criterion (albeit a very important one) evaluated by the Competition Committee while matching teams for play.

D. The Lightweight-Older Rule

1. Many leagues now use the Lightweight-Older Rule. This rule allows a team to have a few players from one day to 364 days too old for the maximum age of the division. Such players remain eligible to play in that division because they must weigh *significantly* less than the maximum division weight for all other players. Teams that incorporate these players on their roster in sufficient quantities strengthen their squad and is yet another factor looked at by the Competition Committee in producing balanced match-ups at the NYFC.

E. Balancing Ages & Weights for the NYFC

1. Being an international football competition, teams do not enter a posted age/weight division as they do during league play. Teams register for the NYFC with age/weight and other match-up information. If their team parallels other similar teams who annually attend, the team is then permitted to enter the NYFC. These match-ups are arguably the most important aspect of the event. While we do not have a crystal ball, the Competition Committee of SNI takes a great deal of care to ensure all teams have fair tournament match-ups when they play at the NYFC.
2. Despite variations in age/weight divisions and cutoff dates nationwide, SNI takes great pride in its track record of forming so many evenly-matched divisions for the NYFC. This is the main reason the NYFC event has been held for well almost 35 years. Unlike some smaller, end-of-the-season football competitions which encourage all teams to enter and then "find someone to play everyone," SNI will only allow a team to attend the event if it has a reasonable belief that we can evenly compete your team with others planning to attend the NYFC. This gives everyone involved a positive post-season experience - win or lose.
3. History has shown that our methods, **much like the method used to match college bowl opponents**, while not infallible, are far superior to just accepting teams into a posted age/weight division. This is because two teams with similar age/weight make-ups can be totally dissimilar on the football field. Other vital match-up considerations at the NYFC include: strength of your competition, regular season records, age cut-off dates, use or non-use of lightweight/older players, and the average age & average weight of your team.
4. Unlike smaller, local football events, attending teams place a great deal of trust in the NYFC Competition Committee to ensure that the football match-ups generated at the event are both fairly executed and produce competitive football games. Teams or leagues having a problem with this result-oriented competition structure should reconsider their attendance at an event of this scope!

F. Team Roster Submission

1. To ensure a balanced competition, all teams must submit a team roster containing every player who may be eligible to make the trip (even put the players who said they can't go...they could and do change their minds!) Teams who neglect to send in their roster(s) risk being placed in a competition division in which they do not fit or being dropped from the competition entirely. **The official roster MUST be entered on the MYTEAM website.** Any other roster submitted cannot serve as the official roster for the event. To ensure this roster contains only players currently playing for the team, a copy of your CERTIFIED LEAGUE ROSTER or equivalent will also be required to be submitted to SNI (this is the roster you use during regular season.). This Certified League Roster should be submitted to SNI by the September 30th roster deadline via your myTeam website (or contact SNI for alternative methods of submission).
2. The Team Roster you submit is the single most important information used to establish your team's competition division and overall team make up. It is absolutely critical that SNI be made aware of changes that are made to your roster after you have submitted it to SNI. Should players drop from your team or become injured and unable to play, update your online roster with this information immediately.

3. The specific individual weights provided for each player on the official NYFC roster are of critical importance. This is where your match-up and max weights are generated. Carefully write these **anticipated** weights, as well as the player positions.
4. By November 1st, teams will re-weigh every player that will be attending and will enter these **accurate/verified weights** on the web. (Any player not planning to attend will be marked as "inactive" at this point.) We will use these weights to set the **maximum allowable weight** for each player for the competition. Even if you normally play in an UNLIMITED weight division, you will be required to provide an estimated and actual weight for every player.

G. Notification of Team Match-ups

1. In early, the Trip Manager and Head Coach should ensure all players who are attending are listed (you haven't left someone off by mistake) as well as check the roster for accuracy, as it was used to determine your match-up. You will also receive a Team Match-up Link within the MyTeam website. This sheet contains a brief overview of the expected teams in your competition division as well as specifics regarding their make-up. At this time, your online roster will show the allowed weight granted for each player. Changes made to the competition divisions after this point are rare and would be presented to Head Coaches on arrival. These match-ups are not to be signed or returned - they are strictly for your information only.

H. The Official Team Weigh-In & Age Check

1. All players are required to be weighed in on arrival day at the prescribed location. **All players should report to the weigh-in wearing game jerseys, lined up in age (SNI roster) order.** All weigh-ins will be conducted by SNI staff using standard scales with the head and assistant coaches of the team permitted to be present. No parents or other team followers are permitted in the room FOR ANY REASON.
2. One member of the coaching staff from any team that is in the same competition bracket is also allowed in the room to watch the weigh-in of a rival team. While only one or two coaches have ever done this, it is important to let teams know the weigh-in process is not a cloaked, secret affair. Weigh-ins are not a "scheduled" process and teams may weigh-in anytime during the prescribed weigh-in hours. SNI reserves the right to videotape the weigh-in process.
3. Any player failing to make the **allowable weight** will be given one last weigh-in opportunity on Thursday morning from 6:45am to 7:30am in the NYFC Headquarter's Room at the Headquarter's Hotel. If a player fails to make the weight on the second try, he cannot be re-weighed -- **he is declared ineligible for the entire tournament.** Once a weigh-in has been completed, it becomes official. There is no additional weigh-in of any players at any point during the remainder of the event unless requested by SNI. It is the **COACH'S RESPONSIBILITY** to ensure every player will make the weight limit assigned for your team for the NYFC competition!
4. **SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING UNLIMITED WEIGHT DIVISIONS:** If your team typically plays in an "Unlimited Weight" division in your league, you will still provide an **estimated weight** for each player by September 30th and an **actual weight** on each player by November 1st. SNI will assign a reasonable maximum allowable weight for each player that the player cannot exceed at weigh-in. If a player exceeds his maximum allowable weight by 7% or 10 pounds (whichever is less) will not be allowed to play. For this reason, it is vital that all player's actual weights be verified and submitted to SNI by November 1st.

Important Note

*Any player whose initial weigh-in weight exceeds his maximum allowed weight by 7% or 10 pounds (whichever is less) is prohibited from playing at the NYFC. This is done for the legal and ethical protection of SNI, the NYFC, and the players. There is no parent, doctor, or other "waiver" that may override this rule. In the weeks preceding the NYFC, it is the responsibility of the head coach to **ensure this situation will not affect any of his players.***

5. After a player has "made the weight," he will be marked with a special hospital-style I.D. band attached to his ankle identifying him as certified to compete at his particular age/weight level. These identification bands will be checked by the SNI Event Staff prior to the kickoff of each NYFC game. Should the band come off during the event, a coach and the player must go to the Event Headquarters **with their birth verification**, to be re-banded. TEAMS MUST ENSURE THEIR DRESS FOR THEIR GAMES DOES NOT KEEP THE SNI STAFF FROM BEING ABLE TO CHECK BANDS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE GAME OR RE-CHECK ANY BAND AT ANY POINT DURING THE GAME!

6. During the official team weigh-in, copies of all player's birth records must be provided to the weigh-in staff, in roster order. Each player attending the competition must have a valid form of birth verification. This includes a birth certificate copy or validated school records. LAMINATED league I.D. cards WITH A PHOTO and OFFICIAL LEAGUE SEAL or PUNCH will also be accepted. Coaches must have these records available at the team weigh-in and at all football games during the NYFC. SNI reserves the right to review these birth records at any point of the competition to validate a player's age. Failure to provide these materials on demand may result in a team being dropped from the NYFC competition and forfeiture of all games played to that point.
7. The trip manager or coach must have a completed Hold Harmless form for every player and cheerleader in attendance. These forms must be completed and signed by the player's parent. These forms will be individually collected at Weigh-in to ensure that there is a Hold Harmless form for every player in attendance.

2. TOURNAMENT SCHEDULING & GAME SPECIFICS

A. Competition Format

1. The basic competition format calls for a four-team competition division. All divisions are split into multiple four-team conferences. This allows SNI to ability-group American & National Conferences within most divisions to devise the most even team match-ups, much like college, bowl-style football games.

B. Game Scheduling

1. Please review the Tentative Schedule of Events for your NYFC competition site to see the basic game layouts, days and times. .

C. The Three-Team Division

1. Occasionally, a division contains only three teams. This could happen because a fourth team never registered or more likely has dropped from the NYFC late. While every effort is made to find a qualified fourth team, a three-team division is certainly functional. When a three-team division does occur, the division will play as follows: team #1 plays #2, team #3 plays the loser of #1 vs. #2 with team #3 then playing the winner of #1 vs. #2. Rarely, teams may be prescheduled to play their games on particular days. While this is rare, it may occur and all teams should be prepared to play their two scheduled games on any combination of days between Thursday, Friday or Saturday.
2. In almost every case of this occurring, one team wins both of their games, one team wins one and loses one, and the third loses both games. This produces one National Champion (2-0) and one Runner-Up National Champion (1-1). The only other possibility is each team goes 1-1. If this occurs, the tie-breaking criteria would be as follows: #1) Fewest points allowed-both games, #2) Fewest points allowed-both first halves, #3) Least points scored-both second halves, #4) Most points scored-both first halves.
3. By using this system, "running up the score" after halftime may be unproductive AND will assure your team of never being invited to attend the NYFC in the future. While we do not suggest you make a travesty of the game, we at SNI feel strongly that your play selection & substitution policy in the second half with a substantial lead will determine your team's "quality" and future involvement at the NYFC.

D. Competition Design

1. When multiple teams enter from the same league, it is possible two teams who have played during the season could be scheduled to play again at the NYFC. With a two game competition, only one game would EVER be scheduled with another team from your league, even in a worst case scenario. Obviously, SNI attempts to keep this from happening whenever possible through division placement & scheduling but all teams must know and accept that this is a possibility - DO NOT CALL ABOUT THIS AFTER THE FACT!

E. NYFC Special Tournament Regulations

1. All games are played using National High School Federation Football rules with input and exceptions in keeping with many of the guidelines provided by USA Football, as follows:
 - a) When on offense, use the ball you played with all season. Teams who find their opponent using a smaller football may opt to utilize the smaller ball on offense to ensure an equal playing field.
2. Contact Fouls: involving the KICKER or HOLDER will result in a 15-yard penalty with automatic first down.
3. Lining Up Over Center: No defensive player may be lined up DIRECTLY over the snapper and on the line of scrimmage if there is no player in position to take a hand-to-hand snap. This restriction is NOT in effect if an offensive player shifts to take a direct, hand to hand snap from center.
4. Extra Point: Two points for a kick, one for a run or pass

5. Jersey Numbers: No Numbering Rule is in effect to determine eligible receivers
6. Game quarters will be 10 minutes regulation stop-clock in all age divisions.
7. Each team receives three time-outs per half.
8. When any team gains a 24-point lead in the second half, two special rules will be instituted:
 - a) The clock runs except on: change of possession, official/team time-out, end of quarter.
 - b) After a score by the team in the lead, the losing team will be given possession of the football at the opposing team's 40-yard line rather than have a kickoff.
9. A division designated as "YOUTH" ("YTH" must be part of the division name – generally 6/7 thru 9 yr. olds) at the NYFC maintains these special rules (**NOTE: VERY FEW divisions fall into this category**):
 - A single coach may be on the field on offense & defense.
 - No kickoffs are utilized. Teams start at their own 35-yard line on offense.
 - No rush is permitted on punts/place-kicks and the kicking team can't go downfield until the ball is kicked. Fake punts or fake place-kicks are NOT allowed.

F. Game Time Specifics

1. All teams are required to be at their game location, dressed and ready to warm up a minimum of 30 minutes before their scheduled game time. Any team not ready to play at kickoff may have their game forfeited to keep from backing-up the start times of the games which follow later in the afternoon/evening.
2. **Game schedules are not distributed until Event Registration.** This ensures SNI the ability to make any last-minute field or start time adjustments due to any last-minute problems. For this reason, please do not ask who you are going to play or when and where the game is scheduled prior to your arrival in town. An emergency change in the game schedule which may become necessary after your team's arrival will be made solely because of an unforeseen competition necessity and in no instance because a team getting its schedule does not like when it plays, where it plays, or who it plays.

G. Game Officials

1. All game officials are certified football officials with special training & experience involving youth football. All games are scheduled to contain four-official crews with the exception of some of the youngest divisions which may be worked by three-official crews.

H. Stadiums & Fields

1. High school stadiums and specially designed youth football complexes are used for the NYFC. Most facilities have a concession stand which is run strictly by the stadium personnel, not by Sports Network. All facilities maintain clean restrooms and ample seating for parents to enjoy the game. All fields maintain a grass playing surface and all are kept in excellent condition year-round.
2. Teams should be reminded that their bench areas should be **CLEANER** after they have finished play than when they arrived! Using these fields is a privilege which we want to be able to count on every year. **Failure to keep your bench area clean WILL result in your team not being invited to return to the NYFC next year.**

I. Tie Games: The Kansas Tie-Breaker

1. There are no tie games at the NYFC. All games ending in a tie are completed using the Kansas Tie-Breaker. The team who last had the ball in regulation will call the coin toss. Team winning coin toss will either choose whether or not to receive the ball first OR choose which end of the field to hold the Kansas Tie-Breaker at (team that loses the coin toss will be left with the other decision). Each team will be given the opportunity to score with the ball placed first & ten at the 10-yard line. Each team is given four downs to score - a touchdown (and ensuing one or two-point conversion) or a field goal. The other team is then given their shot from the 10-yard line. **THE ENDS OF THE FIELD DO NOT CHANGE!**
2. The team who outscored their opponent in this initial series is declared the winner. If both teams score the same number of points, the process begins again from the 10-yard line. If neither team scores, the ball is moved half the distance to the goal and the process repeats itself from the 5-yard line until a winner is declared. An interception, fumble recovery, blocked field goal recovery, or 4-down expiration will create a dead ball and ends the offensive series. The defense may not score points during the tie-breaker.
3. Although touchdowns and field goals retain their value during the tie-breaker, the eventual winner of the tie-breaker will win the game by only one point. For example, a game ends in a 19-19 tie. Team "A" wins the Kansas Tie-Breaker 8-6. Therefore, for purposes of scorekeeping, the official score of the football game will be Team "A" winning the game, 20-19.

J. Game Precautions & Field Safety

1. All stadiums are closed to the public. Entry is allowed ***ONLY*** by showing an NYFC Event Pass. This maintains a secure game site while still allowing authorized attendees into NYFC venues. Coaches paying the team package fee will receive a Sidelines pass as a part of their package at no additional charge.
2. All fields are supervised by Sports Network International personnel who are available to answer any questions or assist your team in any way possible.
3. Each field is located within 5 to 10 minutes of a hospital or emergency transport facility, therefore no ambulances are kept at the fields during the games. Any team wishing to pay for an ambulance to be at the field for their entire game may contact SNI and we will provide you with a listing of local ambulance companies. All stadiums have telephones making immediate medical attention available in a matter of minutes. Calling an ambulance is a decision left strictly up to the Head Coach. Your team is encouraged to bring a team physician should you feel this support is necessary. If your team has a parent who is a physician, SNI will gladly exchange his/her spectator pass for a sideline pass allowing access to the field during games. Please make this exchange during Event Registration.
4. Your team is solely responsible to maintain the health & well-being of your players & cheerleaders during their stay, especially during game play. Therefore, all teams should carry with them at all times all normal items needed for safety during youth football and cheerleading participation. These items should include but will not be limited to: first aid kit, water cooler, towels, chemical cold-packs, etc. Ensure your players and cheerleaders are given plenty of liquids both prior to and during their games! The SNI Field Supervisor at each stadium will have a very basic First-Aid Kit with him/her at all times. While this kit contains very minimal materials, coaches are encouraged to seek out these materials, if needed.

K. Insurance, Injuries, and Illnesses

1. SNI carries liability insurance for all County, City and Stadium facilities used at the NYFC. This is the only insurance coverage carried, as players should be covered with a family or team insurance policy. This policy has nothing whatsoever to do with any health or accident coverage for any injury, illness, accident, or other unforeseen catastrophe involving a participant at the NYFC. Liability for these occurrences are the full responsibility of the organization or parent for minors participating at the NYFC.
2. A **Hold Harmless form** is enclosed in the online folder and must be completed for every player and cheerleader attending. It must be signed by the player's parents and witnessed by another adult. These forms will be turned in to the Trip Manager and will be held by the Trip Manager until Event Registration. These forms will be turned into SNI at weigh-in and cheer registration.